

10 September 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

25X1 ATTENTION :

SUBJECT : Extent of Overseas Medical Benefits for Dependents -- Case of Son of

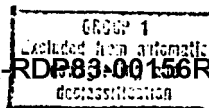
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25X1 REFERENCE :

1. A finding that illness in a dependent is clearly caused by an overseas residence is, at times, a simple matter. The nature of the case has a great deal to do with the ease of determination. For example, a finding of parasitic infestation prevalent to an area of assignment or a chance bullet wound associated with political unrest lend themselves to simple cause and effect relationships. When the illness, however, is in the field of the psyche, cause and effect relationships become less evident. Then the life history and total experience of the individual tends to relate to the later manifestation of illness. If the illness appears in a juvenile, then the onus in many ways seems to relate to the family situation. But to what extent each experience contributes to the clinical eruption of emotional illness is certainly more difficult to say than the earlier examples given regarding parasites or physical trauma. The point to be made is that clear causations may be a valid point in law in describing a benefit but the actualities in a given case may not be conducive to this all or none principle.

2. Because of this all or none principle, it may be that the Government will wind up paying indefinitely for cases declared clearly caused but based on preponderance of evidence. One wonders, in such cases, when benefits, as compared with rights, should cease.

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Case of Son []

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Likewise, one wonders about providing no benefit when a case is not clearly caused but in which a degree of evidence exists.

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3. The [] case is one of those that falls in the latter category. After a careful review of the case, a discussion with [] and a discussion with the Agency Regional Medical Officer, I believe the following observations to be true:

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a. The son's illness was not clearly caused by residence abroad.

b. Overseas residence contributed to the illness.

c. The illness is continuing, and granted a remission is likely, the potential for future similar illness exists.

4. To try and translate the foregoing into some form of benefit seems to be a difficult task. For such a reason, perhaps, the law has attempted to limit benefits to those situations that may be simply defined. It would seem that equity might be served by also including cases less subject to definition. In the [] case, for instance, some benefit limited in time and amount might more realistically represent the Government's share of attribution than the choice of either all or none.

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5. Knowing of your personal interest in such matters, the foregoing observations are submitted in hopes they may contribute to the advances you have achieved in this important area.

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JOHN R. TIETJEN, M. D.
Director of Medical Services

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